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THE SANITARY WAITING ROOM.

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Places where considerable numbers of people come in more or less intimate contact are dangerous from the standpoint of sanitation. They very frequently offer opportunity for the ready interchange of the organisms of disease, and unless such places are maintained in a cleanly condition they may become breeding places for contagion. In such situations, persons in the active or in the chronic carrier stage of a disease have ample opportunity to infect other persons, especially if they are careless in their personal habits, and through ignorance or carelessness are heedless of the health of others. The church, the playhouse, the school, and the railway station are the chief places of public congregation which are dangerous. The church, however, is occupied for comparatively short periods of time only, and not every day in the week. It is frequently cleaned, and unless it harbors infected insects, such as mosquitoes, its danger as a distributing point of disease is relatively small. The same may be said of the playhouse, although it must be admitted that the smaller places, such as the moving picture shows, sometimes act as centers from which the epidemics of influenza and common colds are spread. The importance of the school in the spread of many infectious diseases is now well recognized, and in many localities has received careful attention. Medical inspectors of schools, with the intelligent cooperation of the teachers, are combining to reduce very materially the danger of such places.

The waiting rooms used by passengers on common carriers have received very scant attention, except in the larger and wealthier communities. In rural localities, where the duties of station agent, ticket agent, and janitor are performed by a single individual, such stations are not usually maintained in a sanitary condition. They are frequently loafing places for the unemployed, who in the colder months are attracted by the heat and shelter which the stations afford. Expectoration is frequently promiscuous, and waiting passengers are sometimes obliged to breathe the vitiated and overheated atmosphere for considerable periods of time. This, combined with the overcrowding not infrequently seen in such stations, makes for the spread of disease. Up to a short time ago comparatively little attention was paid to the purity of the water supplied in such stations, and the lethal common drinking cup and the deadly common towel were not infrequently in evidence. These two insanitary

articles have now been banished by interstate quarantine regulations, and the purity of the drinking water is insisted upon.

As a rule, the toilets and other sanitary conveniences are of insanitary pattern and maintained in a condition of noisome filth. It must be admitted in all fairness to the transportation companies that too frequently station toilets are made to take the place of public convenience stations which should be installed and operated by municipalities. In many locations there is simply an outdoor privy, consisting of a small wooden building placed over a hole in the ground. As a rule the seats of this privy are soiled with human excrement and are breeding places for flies, which alternate between the outhouse and the lunches of the waiting travelers. There is small attempt made by the general public to observe the slightest care in keeping these privies clean, and their use by tramps and other irresponsible persons augments their generally filthy condition. Again, in fairness to the transportation companies, it must be admitted that it seems a little hard that they should be obliged to keep these places clean when the population along the right of way do not maintain their private privies in a sanitary condition. It has been found a good rule in the smaller stations to post in these privies a small sign requesting the traveling public to assist in keeping the place clean; also to have the key of the privy kept in the custody of the station agent, so that he may deliver it to responsible persons on request. Not infrequently floors and benches in waiting rooms are covered with pieces of lunches which have been left there by waiting travelers. These attract flies and possibly rats, make the rooms smell bad, and constitute a nuisance. The practice should be discouraged.

From the foregoing it is evident that something is required to cause the waiting rooms to be kept in a more cleanly condition. In the smaller stations, where all of the work is discharged by a single individual, it is practically impossible without the cooperation of the general public. It is believed that this may in a measure be accomplished by the use of proper signs asking travelers to lend their aid in keeping the waiting room clean and sanitary. To this end the following sign may be suggested for display:

DISEASE IS LARGELY PREVENTABLE.

It is the desire of this company to protect its patrons from infectious disease, and for this reason the assistance of the general public is asked in keeping this station in a sanitary condition. This can be accomplished by a strict observance of the following rules:

1. Please do not spit anywhere except in the cuspidor.
2. Please do not litter the room with lunches, papers, tobacco, or matches.
3. Please do not soil the toilet. Ask the station agent for the key.
4. When you travel carry your own drinking cup and towel, and do not allow other persons to use them.
5. Please remember that when you travel on this line its buildings and vehicles are for the time being your home.